

A hopefull way to Cure that horrid sinne of S W E A R I N G :

or an helpe to save Swearers, if willing to be saved : Being

an Offer or Message from H I M whom they so
daringly and audaciously provoke.

Also a Curbe against C U R S I N G.

XXII

Messenger,

{ Before you lay it by, at least read {
{ the Postscript at the end. }

SIr, me thinks you Swear and Curse as if he that made the eare could nor hear, Or as if he were neither to be feared nor cared for, who for sin cast the Angels out of Heaven, Adam out of Paradise, drowned the old world, rained down fire and brimstone upon *Sodome*, commanded the earth to open her mouth, and swallow down quick *Korah* and his company, he who smote *Egypt* with so many plagues, overthrew *Pharaoh* and his host in the Red sea, destroyed great and mighty Kings, giving them an inheritance to his people, and can as easily with a word of his mouth strike you dead while you are blaspheming him, and cast you body and soule into hell for your odious unthankfulnesse; Yea it is a mercy beyond expression that he hath spared you so long.

What, because you are displeased with others, will you lie in your Makers face? and rear your Saviours Name in pieces? This is worse then frenzie, this is to send challenges into Heaven, and make love to destruction; consider of it, lest you swear away your part in that Blood which must save you, if ever you be saved; yea, take heed lest you be plagued with a witnesse, and that both here and hereafter, for God (who cannot lie) hath threatned that his curse shall never depart from the house of the swearer, as it is *Zach. 3. 1. to 5.* And I doubt not but you are already cursed, though you know it not; That either he hath cursed you in your body by sending some foule disease, or in your estate by suddenly consuming it, or in your name by blemishing and blasting it, or in your seed by not prospering it, or in your minde by darkning it, or in your heart by hardning it, or in your conscience by terrifying it, or will in your soul by everlastingly damning it, if you repent not. Wherefore take heed what you do before it prove too late.

Or if you regard not your selfe, or your own soules good, yet for the Kingdoms good leave your swearing, for the Lord (as now we finde to our smart) hath a great controversie with the inhabitants of the land because of swearing, *Hos. 4. 1. 2.* Yea because of oaths the whole land (even the three Kingdoms) now mourneth, or rather lies a bleeding, and that to death, as you may see, *Jer. 23. 10.* Neither object that ye are so accustomed to swearing that you cannot leave it, for this defence is worse then the offence, as take an instance; Shall a Thiefe or Murtherer at the bar allege for his defence, that it hath been his use and custome of a long time to rob and kill, and therefore he must continue it: or if he doe, will not the Judge so much the rather send him to the Gallows.

Besides, the objection is false and frivolous, for were you forced to pay twelve pence for every Oath you swear (as the Law enjoynes) or if you were sure to have your tongue cut out, which is too light a punishment for this sin, damnation being the due penaltie thereof, as the Apostle sets it downe, *Jam. 5. 12* you both could and would leave it. Wherefore I beseech you by the mercies of God (who hath removed so many evils, and conferred so many good things upon you, that they are beyond thought or imagination) to leave it, especially after this warning, which in case you do not, will be a sore witnesse, and rise up in judgement against you another day.

Swearer. Did I swear or curse?

Messenger. Very often, as all here present can witnesse, and Satan also, who stands by to take notice, reckon up, and set on your score every Oath you utter, keeping them upon record against the great day of triall, at which time every Oath will prove as a daggers point stabbing your soule to the heart, or as so many weights pressing you down to hell, *Revel. 12. 10.* As also the searcher of hearts, who himselfe will one day be a swift witnesse against swearers, *Mal. 3. 5.* For of all other sinners the Lord will not hold him guiltlesse that taketh his Name in vaine, as the third Commandment tells you, *Exod. 20. 7.*

But woe is me, it fares with common swearers as with persons desperately diseased, whose excrements and filth comes from them at unawares; for as by much labour the hand is so hardned that it hath no sence of labour, so their much swearing causeth such a brawnie skin of senselesnesse to overspread the heart, memory, and conscience, that the swearer sweareth unwittingly, and having sworn, hath no remembrance of his Oath, much lesse repentance for his sin.

Swearer. Alasse though I did swear, yet I thought no harme.

Messenger. O foole! What Prince, hearing himselfe abused to his face, by the reproachfull words of his base and impotent Subject, would admit of such an excuse, that whatsoever he spake with his mouth, yet he thought no ill in his heart? And shall God take this for a good answer, having told us before hand, *Deut. 28. 58, 59.* that if we doe not feare and dread his glorious and fearfull Name, the Lord our God, he will make our plagues wonderfull, and of long continuance, and the plagues of our posteritie. Besides, how frequently doest thou pollute and prophane Gods Name, and thy Saviours? The Jews grievously sinned in crucifying the Lord of life but once, and that of ignorance, but the times are innumerable that thou doest it,



every day in the yeere, every houre in the day, although thy Conscience and the holy Spirit of grace hath checked thee for it a thousand and a thousand times.

Doeſt thou expect to have Chriſt thy Redeemer and Advocate; when thy Conſcience tell thee that thou haſt ſe dome remembred Him but to blaſpheme Him, and more often named Him in thy oathes and curſes then in thy prayers

Swearer. *Surely if I did ſweare, it was but faith and troth, by our lady, the maſſe, the rood, the light, this bread, by the croſſe of the ſilver, or the like, which is no great matter, I hope, ſo long as I ſwore not by God, nor by my Saviour.*

Messenger. That's your groſſe ignorance of the Scriptures, for God expreſſly forbids it, and that upon paine of damnation, *Jam. 5. 12. First, our Saviour Chriſt in his owne perſon forbids it, Marth. 5. 34, 35, 36, 37. I ſay unto you, Swear not at all, neither by Heaven, for it is Gods throne; nor by Earth, for it is his footſtoole; nor by Jeruſalem, for it is the City of the great King; neither ſhalt thou ſweare by thine head, becauſe thou canſt not make one haire white or blacke; but let your communication be Yea, Yea, Nay, Nay, for what ſoever is more then theſe cometh of evil. And then by his Apoſtle, Above all things, my brethren, ſwear not, neither by Heaven, nor by Earth, nor by any other oath, but let your yea, be yea, and your nay, nay, leſt you fall into condemnation, Jam. 5. 12. where marke the Emphaſis, in the firſt words, Above all things ſwear not; and the great danger of it, in the laſt word, condemnation.*

If the matter be light and vaine, we muſt nor ſweare at all; if ſo weighty, that we may lawfully ſweare as before a Magiſtrate, being called to it, then we muſt onely uſe the glorious Name of our God in a holy and religious manner, as you may ſee, *Deut. 6. 13. Iſa. 45. 23. & 65. 16. Jer. 23. 7. Jer. 5. 7. Exod. 23. 13.* And the reaſons of it are weighty, if we looke into them: for in ſwearing by any creature whatſoever, we doe invoke that creature, and aſcribe to it divine worſhip; a lawfull oath being a kinde of invocation, and a part of Gods worſhip: Yea, whatſoever we ſweare by, that we invoke, both as our witneſſe, ſurety, and judge, *Heb. 6. 16.* and by conſequence deſie it, by aſcribing and communicating unto it Gods incommunicable attributes, as his Omnipreſence, and Omniscience of being every where preſent, and knowing the ſecret thoughts and intentions of the heart, and likewise an omnipotency, as being Almighty in patroniſing, proteſting, defending, and rewarding us for ſpeaking the truth, or puniſhing us if we ſpeake falſly: All which are ſo peculiar to God, as that they can no way be communicated or aſcribed to another. So that in ſwearing by any of thoſe things, thou committeſt an high degree of groſſe Idolatry, thou ſpoileſt and robeſt God of his glory (the moſt impious kinde of theft) and in a manner dethroneſt him and placeſt an Idoll in his roome.

And as to ſweare by the creature makes the ſinne far more hainous, ſo the more meane and vile the thing is which you ſweare by (be it by my ſey, by cock and pie, hares foot, by this cheeſe, and ſuch like childiſh oaths, which are ſo much in uſe with the ignorant and ſuperſtitious ſwarmer) the greater is your ſinne in ſwearing ſuch an oath, becauſe you aſcribe that unto theſe baſeſt of creatures, which is only proper to God, namely to know your heart, and to be a diſcerner of ſecret things, why eſe ſhou'd you call that creature as a witneſſe unto your conſcience, that you ſpeake the truth and lie not, whi h one'y belongeth to God: And therefore the Lord calls it a forſaking of him; as marke we what he ſaith, *Jer. 5. 7. How ſhall I ſpare thee for this? thy children have forſaken me and I ſworne by them that are no gods, Exod. 23. 13.* And doe you make it a ſmall matter to forſake God, and make a God of the creature? Will you beleeve the Prophet Amos, if you will, he ſaith (ſpeaking of them that ſwore by the ſinne of Samaria) *that they ſhall fall and never riſe againe, Amos 8. 14.* a terrible pace to vaine ſwearers.

Neither are we to joyne any other with God in our oaths, for in ſo doing we make baſe Idols and filthy creatures corivals in honour, and competitors in the throne of juſtice with the Lord, who is Creator of Heaven and Earth, and the ſupreme Judge and ſole Monarch of all the world.

Or in caſe we doe, our doome ſhall be remedileſſe, for the Lord threatneth by the Prophet Zephany, *that he will cut off them that ſweare by the Lord, and by Baalham: which Baalham was their King, or as ſome think, their Idoll, Zeph. 1. 4, 5.*

But admit the ſinne were ſmall, as you would have it to be, yet the circumſtances make it moſt hainous; for even the leaſt ſinne in its owne nature is not onely mortall, but reſts unpardonable, ſo long as it is willingly committed, and excuſed or defended.

Swearer. *But all doe ſweare, except ſome few ſingular ones, and they alſo will lie, which is as bad.*

Messenger. You muſt not meaſure all others by your owne buſhell, for although ill diſpoſitions cauſe ill ſuſpicions, even as the eye that is bloodſhed ſees all things red, or as they that have the Jaundees ſee all things yellow; yet know that there be thouſands who can ſay truly, through Gods mercy, that they had rather chuſe to have their ſouls paſſe from their bodies, then a wilfull premeditated lie, or a wicked oath from their mouths; wherefore when you want experience, thinke the beſt, as charity bids you, and leave what you know not to the ſearcher of hearts.

As for the number of ſwearers, it cannot be denied, but the ſinne is almoſt univerſall, and this is it which hath incenſed Gods wrath, and almoſt brought an univerſall deſtruction upon our whole Nation: But is not this excuſe, *That others doe ſo?* a moſt reaſonleſſe plea, and onely becomming a ſoule: when our Saviour Chriſt hath plainly told us, *that the greateſt number goe the broad way to deſtruction, and but*

a few the narrow way which leadeth unto life, *Matth. 7. 13, 14.* and *St. John*, that *the whole world* is in need thereof, *1 John 5. 19.* And that the number of those whom Satan shall deceive, is as the sand of the sea, *Revel. 20. 8.* and *13. 16.* *Isay 10. 22.* *Rom. 9. 27.* And tell me, were it a good plea to commit a felony, and say that others doe so? Or wilt thou leap into hell and cast away thy soule, because others doe so? A sorry comfort it will be to have a numerous multitude accompany us into that lake of fire that never shall be quenched.

Besides, it is Gods expresse charge, *Exod. 23. 2.* *Thou shalt not follow a multitude to doe evil;* and *St. Pauls* everlasting m'e, *Rom. 12. 2.* *Fashion not your selves like unto this world.*

Swearer. But I may lawfully sweare, so I affirme nothing but the truth.

Messenger. If you be lawfully called to it as before a Magistrate, or when some urgent matter constraineth for the confirming of a necessary truth (which can by no other lawfull meanes be cleared) and for the ending of all contentions and controversies, and clearing our owne or our neighbours good name, person, or estate, and to put an end unto all strife, aiming at Gods glory, and our own or our neighbours good, which is the only use and end of an oath; in which case a man is rather a patient then a voluntary agent, You may sweare, otherwise not.

Neither must we sweare at all in our ordinary communication, if we will obey Gods Word, as you may see *Matth. 5. 34, 35, 36, 37.* *James 5. 12.*

Swearer. Except I sweare, men will not beleve me.

Messenger. Thou hadst as good say, I have so often made shipwrack of my credit by accustomed lying, that I can gaine no beleefe unto my words without an oath; for it argues a guilty conscience of the want of credit, and that our word alone is worth no respect, when it will not be taken without a pawne or surety. Neither will any but base banquerouts pawne so precious a jewell as their faith, or offer better security for every small trifle. Besides, he that often sweareth, nor seldom forsweareth. And so I have informed you from Gods Word what the danger is of vaine and wicked swearing.

Now if you either beleve the Scriptures, or desire to escape that direfull sentence, *Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire prepared for the Devill and his angels, Matth. 25. 41.* No longer excuse nor defend it, but repent of it and forsake it; and so much the rather for that of all other finnes this sinne of swearing is the most inexcusable. First, because it is a sinne from which of all other finnes we have most power of abstinence, as I shewed you before; and the easier the thing commanded is, the greater guilt in the breach of it; and the lighter the injunction, the heavier the transgression; as *St. Austin* speaks, and *Adam* his eating the forbidden fruit sufficiently proves. Secondly, because it is a sin, to which of all other sins we have the fewest temptations; for all thou canst expect by it is the suspicion of a common lyer by being a common swearer; Or that thou shalt vex others, and they shall hate thee: for it bringeth not so much as any appearance of good unto us to induce us: for whereas other sins have their severall baits to allure us, some the bait of profit, some of honour, some of pleasure, this sin is destitute of them all, and onely bringeth much losse here, namely of credit and a good conscience; and the losse of Gods favour, and the Kingdome of Heaven hereafter, which is of more value then ten thousand worlds; which shews that thou lovest this sin onely because it is a sin, and swearest out of meere malice and contempt of God, which is most fearfull; and (as a man would thinke) should make it unpardonable. I am sure the Psalmist hath a terrible word for all such, if they would take notice of it, *Let them be confounded that transgresse without a cause, Psal. 25. 3.*

And no marvell, that this fearfull imprecation shou'd fall from the Prophets mouth; for that man is bottomlesly ill, who loves vice meerly because it is a vice, and because God most strictly forbids it. He is a desperate, prodigious, damnable wretch, who (rather then not die) will anger God on set purpose.

But as if swearing alone would not presse thee deep enough into hell, thou add'st Cursing to it, a sin of an higher nature; which none use frequently, but such as are desperately wicked: it being their peculiar brand in Scripture, as how doth the Holy Ghost stigmatize such an one? *His mouth is full of cursing, Psal. 10. 7* and *Rom. 3. 14.* or, *He loveth cursing, Psal. 109. 17.* and indeed, whom can you observe to love this sin, or to have their mouths full of cursing? but ruffaines, and sons of Belial, such as have shaken out of their hearts the feare of God, the shame of men, the love of Heaven, the dread of Hell, not once caring what is thought or spoken of them here or what becomes of them hereafter; yea, observe them well, and you will finde, that they are mockers of all that march not under the pay of the Devill.

And whence do these monsters of the earth, these hellish miscreants, these bodily and visible devils learne this their damnable cursing and swearing? are not their tongues fired and edged from hell, as *Saint James* hath it. *Jam. 3. 6* yea, it is the very language of the damned, as you may see *Revel. 16. 11, 21.* Only they learne it here before they come thither; and are such proficients therein, that the Devill counts them his best scholars, and sets them in his highest forme, *Psal. 1. 1.* And well they deserve it, with whom the language of hell is so familiar, that blasphemy is become their mother tongue. Besides, it is the very depth of sin, roaring and drinking is the horse way to hell; whooring and cheating the foot way; but swearing and cursing foliows *Corah, Dathan, and Abiram.* And certainly, if the infernall Tophet be not for these men, it can challenge no guests. But see how witlesse, gracelesse, and shamelesse, even the best are that use to

name; for I passe over such as call for a curse on themselves, saying, God damne me, confound me, the
vill take me, and the like; which would make a rationall man tremble to name; because I were as good
knock at a dead mans grave, as speak to them.

Thou art crossed by some one, perhaps thy wife, childe, or servant; or else thy horse, the weather, the
dice, bowles, or some other of the creatures displease thee; and thou fallest a cursing, and blaspheming
them, wishing the plague of God, or Gods vengeance to light on them, or some such hellish speech falls
from thy foule mouth. And so upon every foolish trifle, or every time thou art angry, God must be at thy
beck, and come downe from Heaven in all haste, and become thine officer to revenge thy quarrell, and serve
thy malicious humour. (O monstrous impiety! O shamelesse impudency! to be abhorred of all that heare
it) nor once taking notice what he commands in his Word, as, *Blesse them that persecute you, blesse, I say, and
curse not, Rom. 12. 14. And againe, Blesse them that curse you, and pray for them which hurt you, Luke 6. 28.*
which is the practise of all true Christians, *1 Cor. 4. 12.*

But this is not one halfe of thine offence, for whom doest thou curse? Alas the creatures that displease
thee are but instruments, thy sin is the cause, and God is the Author, *2 Sam. 16. 11. Psal. 39. 9, 10. Gen. 45. 8.*
Job 1. 21. from whom thou hast deserved it, and ten thousand times a greater crosse. But in stead of look-
ing up from the stone, to the hand which threw it; or from the effect, to the cause; as Gods people doe:
thou like a mastiffe dog settest upon the stone or weapon that hurts thee. But in this case who are you an-
gry withall? Does your Horse, the Dice, the Raine, or any other creature displease you? alas, they are
but servants, and if their master bid smite, they must not forbear; they may say truly what *Rabshakeh*
usurped, *Jsa. 36. 10. Are we come without the Lord,* and all that heare thee may say, as the Prophet did to
*Senacharib. 2 King. 19. 22. Whom hast thou blasphemed? and against whom hast thou exalted thy selfe? even
against the holy One of Israel.*

And what will be the issue? the causelesse curse shall not come where the curser meant it, *Prov. 26. 2.*
yea though thou cursest, yet God will blesse, *Psal. 109. 28.* but thy curses shall be sure to rebound backe
into thine owne brest, *Psal. 7. 14, 15, 16. Prov. 14. 30.* Cursing mouthes are like ill made Peeeces, which
while men discharge at others, recoile in splinters on their owne faces. Their words and wishes be but
whirlwinds, which being breathen forth, returne againe to the same place. As heare how the Holy Ghost
delivers it, *Psal. 109. As he loved cursing, so shall it come unto him; and as he loved not blessing, so shall it be far
from him. As he clothed himselfe with cursing like a garment, so shall it come into his bowels like water, and like
oyle into his bones; let it be unto him as a garment to cover him, and for a girdle where with he shall alwayes be
girded, vers. 17, 18, 19.* Heare this all ye, whose tongues run so fast on the Devils errand, you loved cur-
sing, you shall have it, both upon you, about you, and in you, and that everlastingly, if you persevere and
goe on; for Christ himselfe at the last day, even he which came to save the world, shall say unto all such,
Depart from me ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devill and his angels, Mat. 25. 41. Where they
shall doe nothing but curse for evermore; for they no farther apprehending the goodnesse, mercy, and
bounty of God, then by the sense of their owne torments, the effects of his justice shall hate him, and
hating him they shall curse him, *Revel. 16. 11, 21.* They suffer, and they blaspheme, there is in them a
furious malice against him, being cursed of him they recuse him; they curse him for making them, curse
him for condemning them, curse him because being adjudged to death, they can never finde death; they
curse his punishments, because they are so unsufferable; curse his mercies, because they may never taste
them; curse the Blood of Christ shed on the Crosse, because it hath satisfied for millions, and done their
unbeleevng soules no good; curse the Angels and Saints in Heaven, because they see them in joy and
themselves in torment; Cursings shall be their sins, and their chiefe ease; Blasphemies their Prayers, La-
cryme their notes; Lamentation all their harmony; these shall be their evening songs, their morning
songs, their mourning songs for ever and ever. And indeed, who shall goe to Hell, if cursers should be
left out. Wherefore let all those learne to blesse, that looke to be heirs of the blessing.

Other objections follow in this conference, and are accordingly answered (with the meanes of cure
prescribed, &c.) in the ten ensuing pages, which are also printed for such as think these foure over short.
But being loth either to surfet or cloy the swearer, who is commonly short breath'd in well doing, and least
adding more should hinder him from reading this (for Satan and his corrupt heart will not condescend
he shall hold out to heare his beloved sin so spoken against) it brakes off thus abruptly.

Postscript.

YOU that feare God, or have any bowels of compassion towards the precious soules of those poore igno-
rant men, women, and children, whom you heare to sweare and curse as dogs bark; (that is not more
of cursines then out of custom;) wish them to read these four pages, which I thought fit to print, even as
I found it in the beginning of a Manuscript. And in case you perceive good come of it, give of them to
your friends and neighbours. At *James Crooms*, a Bookbinder in little *Bartholomewes Well-yard*, you may
have as many gratis, as you shall be pleased to distribute. If you would paste it on a wall, or Table, take
two of each leafe, placing the pages thus

1. 3. } paring away the margents.
2. 4. }

Imprimatur *John Downam.*